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Cultural Affairs Committee

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11-23-2004

# Spring 2005 New Writing Series

English Department

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**THE CULTURAL AFFAIRS/ DISTINGUISHED  
LECTURE SERIES COMMITTEE  
GRANT APPLICATION**

PROVIDE 10 (TEN) COPIES, INCLUDING THE ORIGINAL.  
PLEASE PLACE A COPY OF THIS COVER SHEET ON TOP OF EACH COPY

I. Applicant/Organization: NEW WRITING SERIES

II. a. Responsible Organization Officer: STEVE EVANS

b. Title: ASST. PROFESSOR, COORDINATOR OF NWS

c. Campus Address (include EMail and Telephone): 215 NEVILLE 581-3809

III. Summary of program requiring funding (title; featured artist(s); speaker(s); scheduled date (s):

NEW WRITING SERIES • SPRING 2005

Lyn Hejinian  
Michael Palmer  
Ammiel Alcalay and Peter Culley  
Juliana Spahr and Mark McMorris  
Peter Gizzi and Elizabeth Willis

Expand in fuller detail, a supporting statement with detailed, itemized budget. Funding for current application is contingent upon submission of detailed budget and attendance report for any previous years' grants.

IV. a. Total funding required for program: .....> 11,970  
b. Amount committed by applicant organization: .....> 6,470  
c. Amount committed by/requested of (please indicate which) other funding sources: .....> 0  
d. Amount requested of Cultural Affairs/DLS Committee: .....> 5,500

Signature of responsible organization officer/date: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE

11-23-04  
DATE

SPACE BELOW FOR COMMITTEE USE:

\$5500

SEND COMPLETED APPLICATION TO: CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE  
C/O PRESIDENT'S OFFICE  
200 ALUMNI HALL

Department of English

23 November 2004



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Dear Members of the Cultural Affairs Committee,

I am writing on behalf of the English Department and the National Poetry Foundation to request the Committee's continued support of the New Writing Series. With the Committee's past support, the Series has been able to host 85 events to date, featuring more than 110 writers, and it has earned a steady local audience (in the fall of 2004, several events drew more than 100 people, while the overall average was in the 40-50 range) as well as a growing national reputation. The **\$5,500** I am requesting for the spring of 2005 represents less than one half of the Series' projected operating budget of approximately **\$11,970** for the semester (please see attached budget; reception and/or meal costs are not factored into the quoted figure). The remainder of the required funding will be provided by the English Department, largely through the Lloyd H. Elliott fund.

The primary objectives of the New Writing Series are (i) to make contemporary poetry a valued part of the cultural life at the University of Maine, (ii) to broaden the University's local, national, and international reputation as a site of vibrant cultural exchange and creativity, and (iii) to cultivate links within the University as well as between the University and area secondary schools that foster imaginative approaches to thinking about contemporary poetry. Whereas developing an audience for individual poetry events can be difficult, a Series creates an ongoing context for the exploration of contemporary writing and signals a more serious level of commitment to the inclusion of the literary arts in the cultural repertoire of campus and community life.

At the Committee's request, I am applying for support for the spring 2005 semester at this time rather than in March, as has been my (incorrect) practice in the past (my apologies!). As I have not fully adapted to this new time frame, I have not yet finalized all the agreements for the spring slate at this time, but I can assure the committee that such changes as may occur will have little to no financial impact (honoraria are locked at the relatively low figure of \$500 and the only variability I can foresee would be in travel costs, which in our price-gouging market tend to average about \$600 per traveler). While specific dates have not been worked out, the Series will return to its predictable Thursday afternoon pattern in the spring, proceeding at a roughly bi-weekly pace in the middle ten weeks of the semester.

For the spring I have planned two solo events by poets with high national profiles, Academy of American Poets chancellor Michael Palmer and the editor of the 2004 *Best American Poetry* Lyn Hejinian. I have also planned three two-person events, pairing feminist experimentalist Juliana Spahr with the Jamaican-born poet and scholar Mark McMorris; the Vancouver writer Peter Culley with the poet and Middle East commentator Ammiel Alacalay; and the poet, Jack Spicer scholar, and head of the graduate creative writing program at UMass Amherst Peter Gizzi with Elizabeth Willis, a poet with three books to her credit and a position at Wesleyan.

In the spring, we will enter our fourth and, sadly, final semester of a project in collaboration with local filmmaker Jim Sharkey of Folk Films (Sharkey and his family plan a move out of the area come summer). The "Poet Profiles" films that are the fruit of this collaborative effort (28 films to date, with eight more projected this semester) extend the necessarily brief campus visits into contexts where a conventional visit/reading could not reach (e.g. libraries, high school classrooms, public access cable television), thus further broadening the audience for UMaine-supported poetry in the state and across the country. I'm excited to report that in the spring, a dozen or so of the films will make up the core of a course taught at the nation's flagship creative writing institution—the Iowa Writer's Workshop—where fall 2004 NWS poet Cole Swensen is designing a workshop around these materials. By virtue of Mr. Sharkey's generous willingness to work at greatly reduced rates on this project, we are able to turn a modest financial commitment (\$1200 for eight films; see "fixed expenses" in the budget) into a lasting testimony to the diversity and excellence of the contemporary literature supported by the University of Maine.

I've attached a budget and some brief notes about the visiting writers below. If I can provide any further information to the Committee, I hope you will not hesitate to contact me.



Steve Evans

Assistant Professor of English  
Coordinator of the New Writing Series  
581-3809

**Event Expenses**

poet	honorarium	travel	by	from	accomm.	meals
Lyn Hejinian	\$500	\$600	plane	San Francisco	120	100
Michael Palmer	\$500	\$600	plane	San Francisco	120	100
Ammiel Alcalay	\$500	\$600	plane	New York	120	100
Peter Culley	\$500	\$600	plane	Vancouver	120	100
Juliana Spahr	\$500	\$600	plane	Oakland	120	100
Mark McMorris	\$500	\$600	plane	Washington DC	120	100
Peter Gizzi	\$500	\$600	plane	Chicago	120	100
Elizabeth Willis	\$500	\$600	plane	Boston	120	100
	\$4,000	\$4,800			960	800

**Fixed Expenses**

Agent	Service	Expense	Note
Staples	Paper and Toner	150	Broadsides
Sam's Club	DV tapes	60	16 tapes
MaJo Kaleshian	Poster Design	225	
Printer	Poster Printing	150	100 posters
Marketing Dept	Spring Videotaping	175	\$35 per event
Pulp & Paper	Soderberg Rental	250	\$50 per event
Folk Films	Poet Profiles	800	\$100 per poet
Folk Films	Materials	400	vhs dupes
		2210	

**Total Expenses**

Honoraria	4000
Travel	4800
Accommodations	960
Fixed	2210
total	11970

**Lyn Hejinian**

Lyn Hejinian was born in the San Francisco Bay Area in 1941. Poet, essayist, and translator, she is also the author or co-author of fourteen books of poetry, including *The Beginner* (Spectacular Books, 2000), *Happily* (Post Apollo Press, 2000), *Sight* (with Leslie Scalapino, 1999), *The Cold of Poetry* (1994), *The Cell* (1992), *My Life* (1980), *Writing Is an Aid to Memory* (1978), and *A Thought Is the Bride of What Thinking* (1976). From 1976 to 1984, Hejinian was editor of Tuumba Press, and since 1981 she has been the co-editor of *Poetics Journal*. She is also the co-director of Atelos, a literary project commissioning and publishing cross-genre work by poets. Her honors include a Writing Fellowship from the California Arts Council, a grant from the Poetry Fund, and a Translation Fellowship (for her Russian translations) from the National Endowment of the Arts. She recently received the sixty-sixth Fellowship from The Academy of American Poets for distinguished poetic achievement at mid-career. She lives in Berkeley, California.

**Michael Palmer**

Michael Palmer was born in New York City in 1943. He is the author of numerous books of poetry, including *Codes Appearing: Poems 1979-1988* (New Directions, 2001), *The Promises of Glass* (2000), *The Lion Bridge: Selected Poems 1972-1995* (1998), *At Passages* (1996), *Sun* (1988), *First Figure* (1984), *Notes for Echo Lake* (1981), *Without Music* (1977), *The Circular Gates* (1974), and *Blake's Newton* (1972). His work has appeared in literary magazines such as *Boundary 2*, *Berkeley Poetry Review*, *Sulfur*, *Conjunctions*, and *O-blek*. Michael Palmer's honors include two grants from the Literature Program of the National Endowment for the Arts and a Guggenheim Foundation fellowship. In 1999 he was elected a Chancellor of The Academy of American Poets. He lives in San Francisco.

**Juliana Spahr**

Juliana Spahr is the author of *Response* (Sun & Moon Press), *Everybody's Autonomy: Connective Reading and Collective Identity* (University of Alabama Press), and *Fuck You—Aloha—I love you* (Wesleyan UP). Co-editor of the journal *Chain*, she teaches creative writing at Mills College in Oakland.

**Mark McMorris**

Mark McMorris was born in Kingston, Jamaica, and attended the Excelsior School. He earned a bachelor's degree from Columbia College, Columbia University, and lived and worked in Manhattan before moving to Providence, RI, for graduate study. He has a master's degree in Creating Writing (Poetry) and a doctorate in Comparative Literature from Brown University. He is currently an associate professor of English at Georgetown University, and is the former director of the Georgetown Poetry & Seminar Series and the university's Lannan Fellows Program. A two-time winner of the Contemporary Poetry Series award from the University of Georgia Press, Mr. McMorris is the author of four books of poetry: *The Café at Light* (Roof Books, 2004), *The Blaze of the Pouï* (University of Georgia Press, 2003), *The Black Reeds* (University of Georgia Press, 1997), and *Moth-Wings* (Burning Deck, 1996). *The Blaze of the Pouï*, was a finalist for

this year's \$25,000 Leonore Marshall prize administered by the Academy of American Poets.

### **Ammiel Alcalay**

Ammiel Alcalay is a poet, translator, critic and scholar; he teaches in the department of Classical, Middle Eastern & Asian Languages & Cultures and in the Medieval Studies Program and Comparative Literature Department at the CUNY Graduate Center. His latest work, *From the Warring Factions* (Beyond Baroque, 2002), is a book-length poem dedicated to the Bosnian town of Srebrenica. *Poetry, Politics & Translation: American Isolation and the Middle East*, a lecture given at Cornell, was published in 2003 by Palm Press. His other books include *After Jews and Arabs: Remaking Levantine Culture* (University of Minnesota Press, 1993), the *cairo notebooks* (Singing Horse Press, 1993), and *Memories of Our Future: Selected Essays, 1982-1999* (City Lights, 1999). He has also translated widely, including *Sarajevo Blues* by the Bosnian poet Semezdin Mehmedinovic (City Lights, 1998), and *Keys to the Garden: New Israeli Writing* (City Lights, 1996). Current projects include translations of a new book by Semezdin Mehmedinovic, *Nine Alexandrias*, due out from City Lights in Fall, 2003; a Hebrew novel, *Outcast*, by Shimon Ballas, and a book of essays, *Politics & Imagination*. He has been a regular contributor to the *Village Voice* and his poetry, prose, reviews, critical articles, and translations have appeared in *The New York Times Book Review*, *The New Yorker*, *Time Magazine*, *The New Republic*, *Grand Street*, *Conjunctions*, *Sulfur*, *The Nation*, and various other publications.

### **Peter Culley**

Peter Culley was born in 1958 and has published 5 books of poetry including *The Climax Forest* (Leech Books, 1995) and *Hammertown* (New Star, 2003). His writings on art have appeared in numerous catalogues and publications, including *Mosses from an Old Manse*. He lives in South Wellington on Vancouver Island.

### **Peter Gizzi**

Peter Gizzi grew up in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. His poetry collections include *Artificial Heart* (Burning Deck, 1998); *Periplum* (Avec, 1992); and *Some Values of Landscape and Weather* (Wesleyan, 2003). He has taught at Brown University (1993-94), the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics (1998), and the University of California, Santa Cruz (1995-2001). Currently he teaches and directs the M.F.A. Program in Creative Writing at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

### **Elizabeth Willis**

Elizabeth Willis was born in 1961 in Awali, Bahrain and grew up primarily in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. Her publications include three volumes of poems: *The Human Abstract* (1995), the book-length poem, *Second Law* (1993), and *Turneresque* (2003). Her chapbooks are *A Maiden* (1993) and *A/O* (1991). In 1994 she won the National Poetry Series, selected by Ann Lauterbach. Her work has been anthologized in the Gertrude Stein Awards in Innovative North American Poetry 1993-94. She holds a Ph.D. from SUNY at Buffalo and currently is an Assistant Professor at Wesleyan.